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NSC BRIEFING

2 June 1959

SOVIET AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION

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- I. Production of aircraft in USSR [] marked
by continued very low level of activity in production of heavy
bombers and probable phasing out of production of medium bombers. 25X1

1. This may be Soviet effort to maintain production capability
and to keep skilled labor force intact. It is possible this
capacity to be used to produce improved BISON or some
other bomber. 25X1

3. We estimate modified BISONs, about 12 of which now in
operational units, are capable of reaching most US targets
on two-way missions with one refueling.

- D. BEAR turboprop heavy bomber is only Soviet bomber capable
of unrefueled two-way flights against most of United States.

USAF review(s)
completed.

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25X1

1. Production of BEAR believed to have ceased in late 1956

*3. D/I, USAF believes BEAR production did not
or early 1957. Stop until latter half 1958; 60-70 produced.*

2. Total production of BEAR estimated at about 50 to 60 aircraft.

E. BADGER jet medium bomber production believed virtually stopped. ^{25X1}

2. Total production of BADGERS to date is estimated about 1800
aircraft. *D/I, USAF believes about 1900 BADGERS have been
produced.*

II. Only large new Soviet bomber definitely known to be under development
is BOUNDER. This four-turbojet bomber was first observed in Moscow ^{25X1}
in August last year.

B. BOUNDER potentially supersonic and may be intended as carrier
of air-to-surface missile.

1. It is also possible that BOUNDER will be developed with more
advanced propulsion system.

25X1

2. Should USSR decide to produce this prototype in its present configuration, it would probably be medium range bomber comparable in range to BADGER rather than BISON or BEAR.

III. Soviet aviation research and development centers will continue to work toward improved manned aircraft.

- A. Whether or not new intercontinental bombers are developed to point of operational use will depend on Soviet judgment as to their effect on world balance of military force, in light of Western capabilities and other available Soviet weapons system.
- B. Intelligence community is preparing estimate which will thoroughly review Soviet long-range bomber and missile capabilities for strategic attack over next few years.
- C. Considering recent trends, we now believe that for at least next year or two, Soviet manned bomber capability against continental United States will remain substantially unchanged.

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